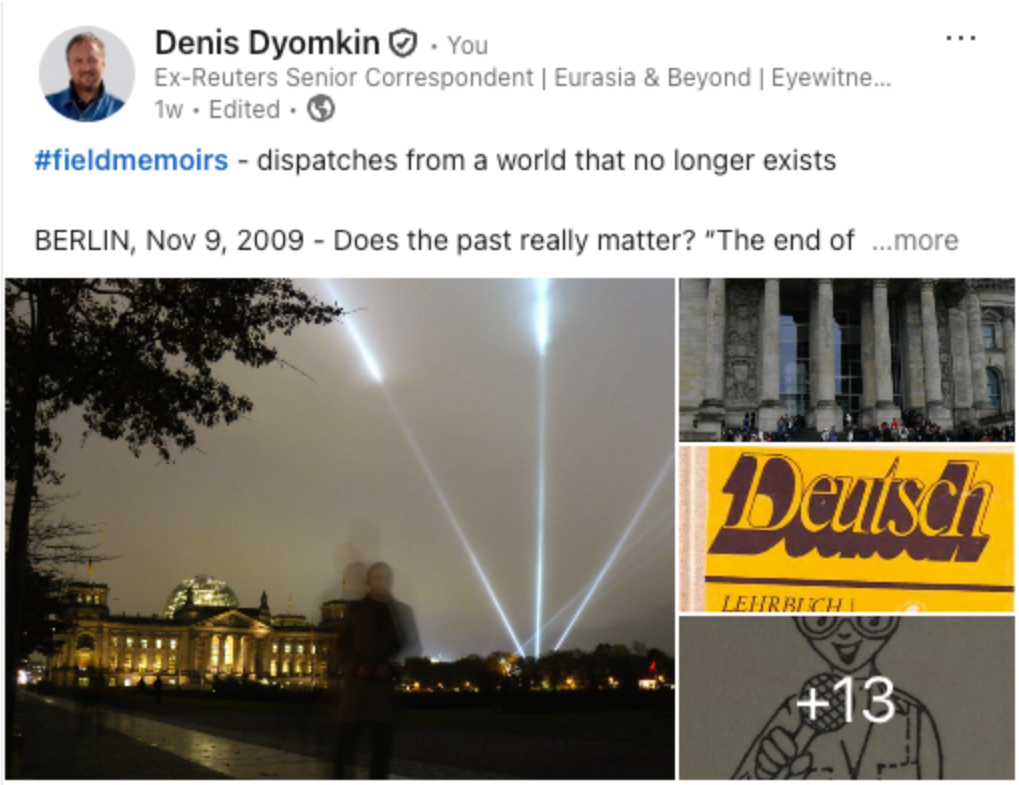
Denis Dyomkin • You
Ex-Reuters Senior Correspondent | Eurasia & Beyond | Eyewitne...
1w • Edited •
#fieldmemoirs - dispatches from a world that no longer exists
BERLIN, Nov 9, 2009 - Does the past really matter? "The end of ...more
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Denis Dyomkin
Ex-Reuters Senior Correspondent | Eurasia & Beyond | Eyewitness Archive
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#fieldmemoirs - dispatches from a world that no longer exists

BERLIN, Nov 9, 2009 - Does the past really matter? “The end of history” has aged ungraciously, evolving from a messianic political and philosophical concept into something of a laughingstock. It is difficult to believe the past is still relevant as we witness in bewilderment ever-new manifestations of the butterfly effect. But the past is the only thing we can be (somewhat) certain about.

The Berlin Wall and the world around it are among those certainties. The eastern part of divided Germany was presented in my German-language textbook for Soviet high schools, featuring Schreibicus the Reporter.

Then came glasnost-era Soviet TV reports covering the unthinkable: the end of the Wall. Far Northerner by birth, I first stood (pictured) at the Brandenburg Gate in 1996. The 1st USSR gen to travel freely.

All thanks to Gorby. “Tear down this wall!”

And then, I was covering the 20th anniversary of that epochal shift for Reuters. In pouring rain, in a symbolic gesture, Angela Merkel, Mikhail Gorbachev himself, and Lech Walesa walked across the Bornholmer Strasse to celebrate the moment that paved the way for German unification and inspired Francis Fukuyama and millions more.

The Russian president at the time, Dmitry Medvedev, was also present. He called for building a "new, better world." (I was there as a Kremlin pool reporter. See the Reuters reportage: https://lnkd.in/gga-KS44). The West still saw Medvedev as a chance for Putin's Russia to return to a liberal track.

And then in 2010 I served as a judge, with peers from Agencia EFE and other outlets, for a nationwide contest for Russian citizen journalists titled "A Generation 20 Years After the Fall of the Berlin Wall", organized by the European External Action Service to support independent media https://lnkd.in/gk-ACm4i

And then I shook Gorbachev's hand (broad, warm, firm) at Putin's 2012 ominous inauguration at the Kremlin. Based on the 6-handshake rule, that means I was just two handshakes from Ronald Reagan. (If you have shaken my hand, you are three.)

But Gorby's appeal to Putin to "correct the error," those new draconian laws restricting freedom of assembly (my story, in Russian: https://lnkd.in/gBMEtWrS), was ignored, as Russia moved further from the freedom that November night in Berlin had promised. And I eventually closed the door to emigrate, leaving behind what had long ceased to exist.

My shots (cardboard Wall dominos etc) + EPA and Reuters footage. (Bono performed "One" in the city where the hymn was born 20 years ago. A year later I would see U2's frontman up close as I pioneered the use of a BlackBerry for a photo that made the Reuters wire. I'll share a story behind it in
hashtag
#fieldmemoirs.)

History does not end - it echoes. And sometimes it shakes your hand.
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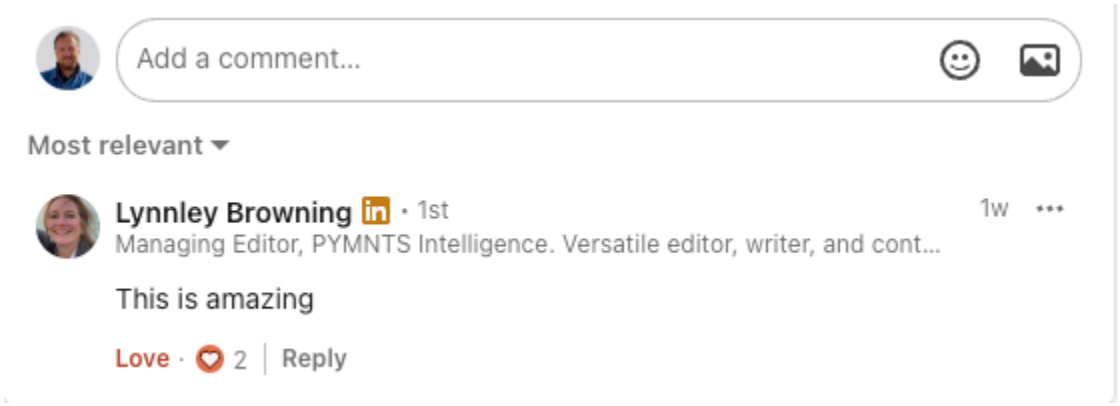
Personal reflections from a former Reuters Kremlin correspondent.
Views are my own and do not represent the Government of Canada.

#Historical_Journalism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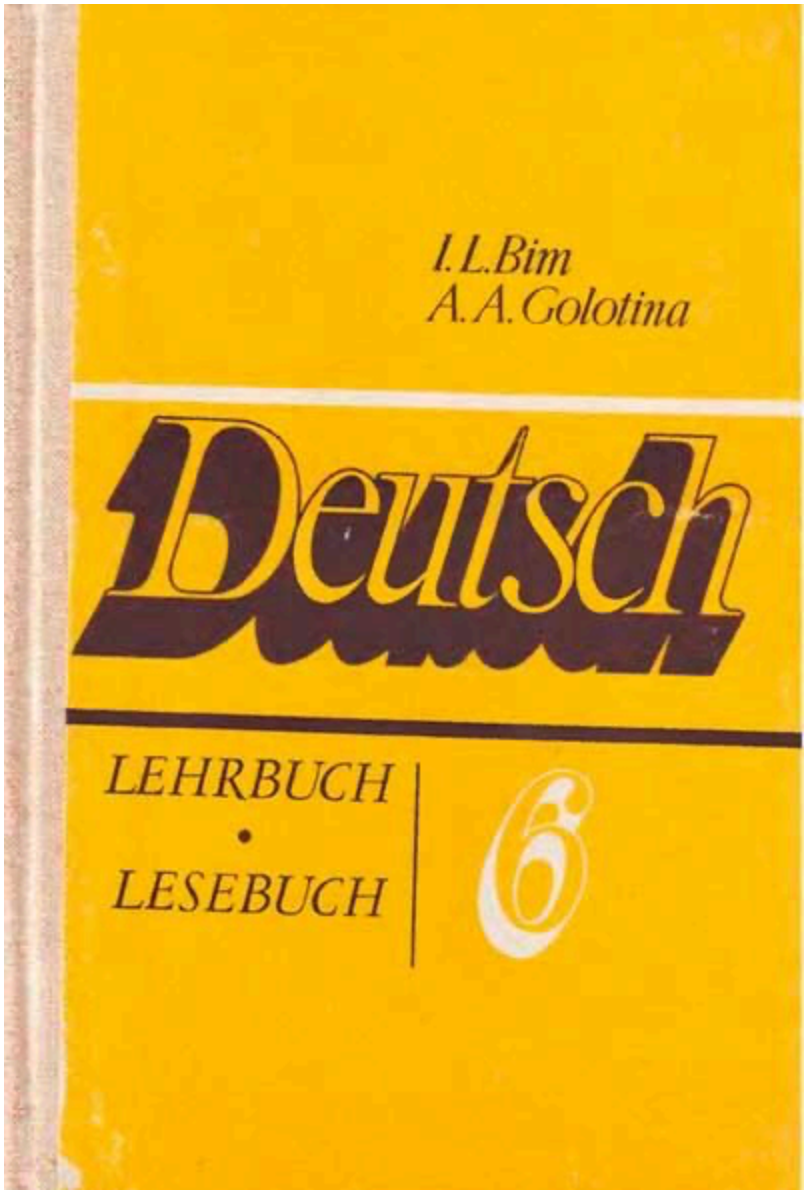
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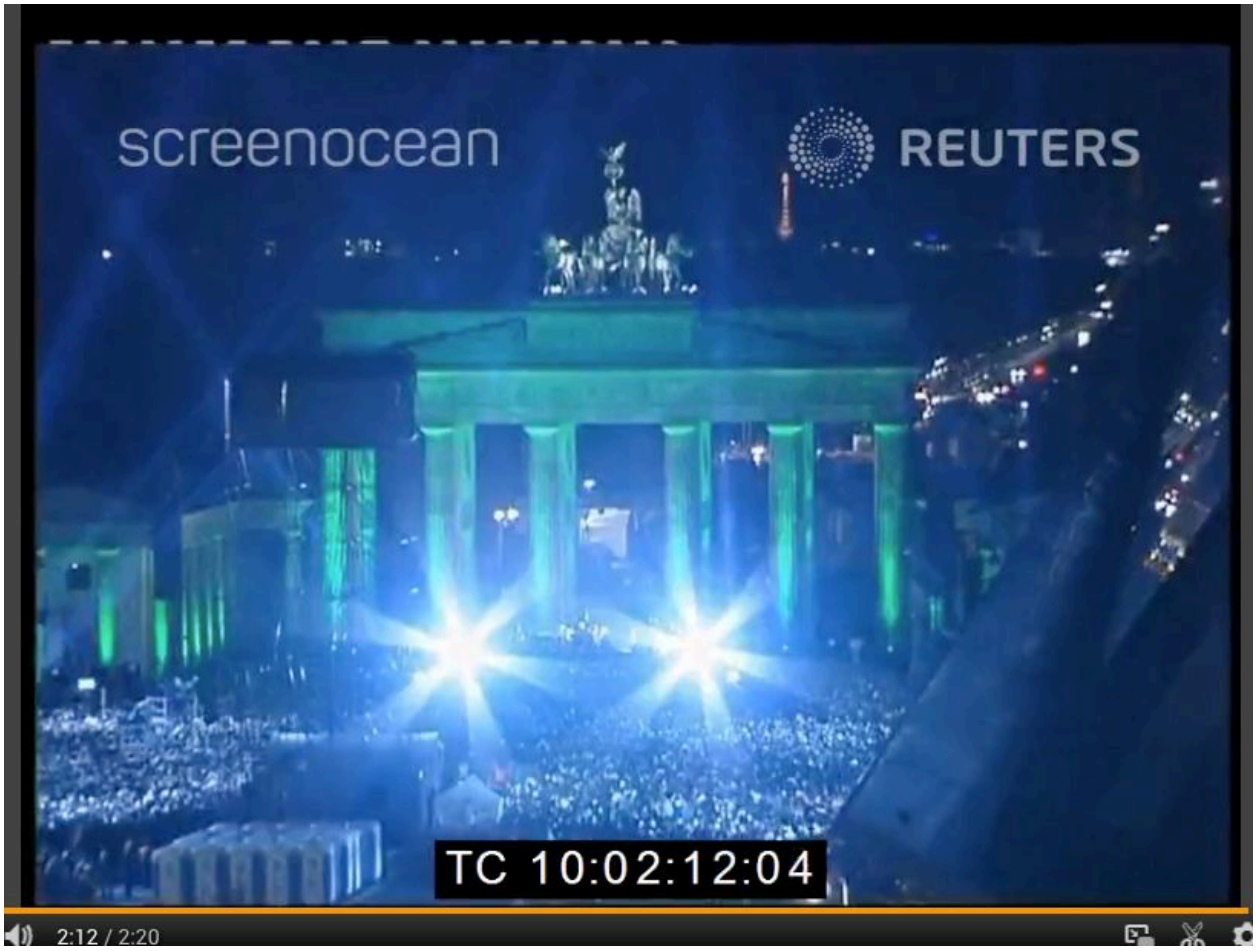
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Ohne den Mauerfall
hätten wir uns nicht
Kennengelernt
Und keine Elisabeth
*18.06.2003,ichliebe
Nun können
WIR GEMEINSAM
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Hinter der
Mauer muss die
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wohl grenzen-
los sein...
Viel Glück
IN BERLIN
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Fest der Freiheit
2009

euro
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Конкурс для
онлайн-журналистов
и блогеров
Поколение
20
лет спустя
после ПАДЕНИЯ
Берлинской стены
БЛОГ
WIKI
КОНКУРС

**Уважаемый господин Демкин!**

*Представительство Европейского Союза в России*
*совместно с РИА Новости*

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*на церемонию награждения победителей*
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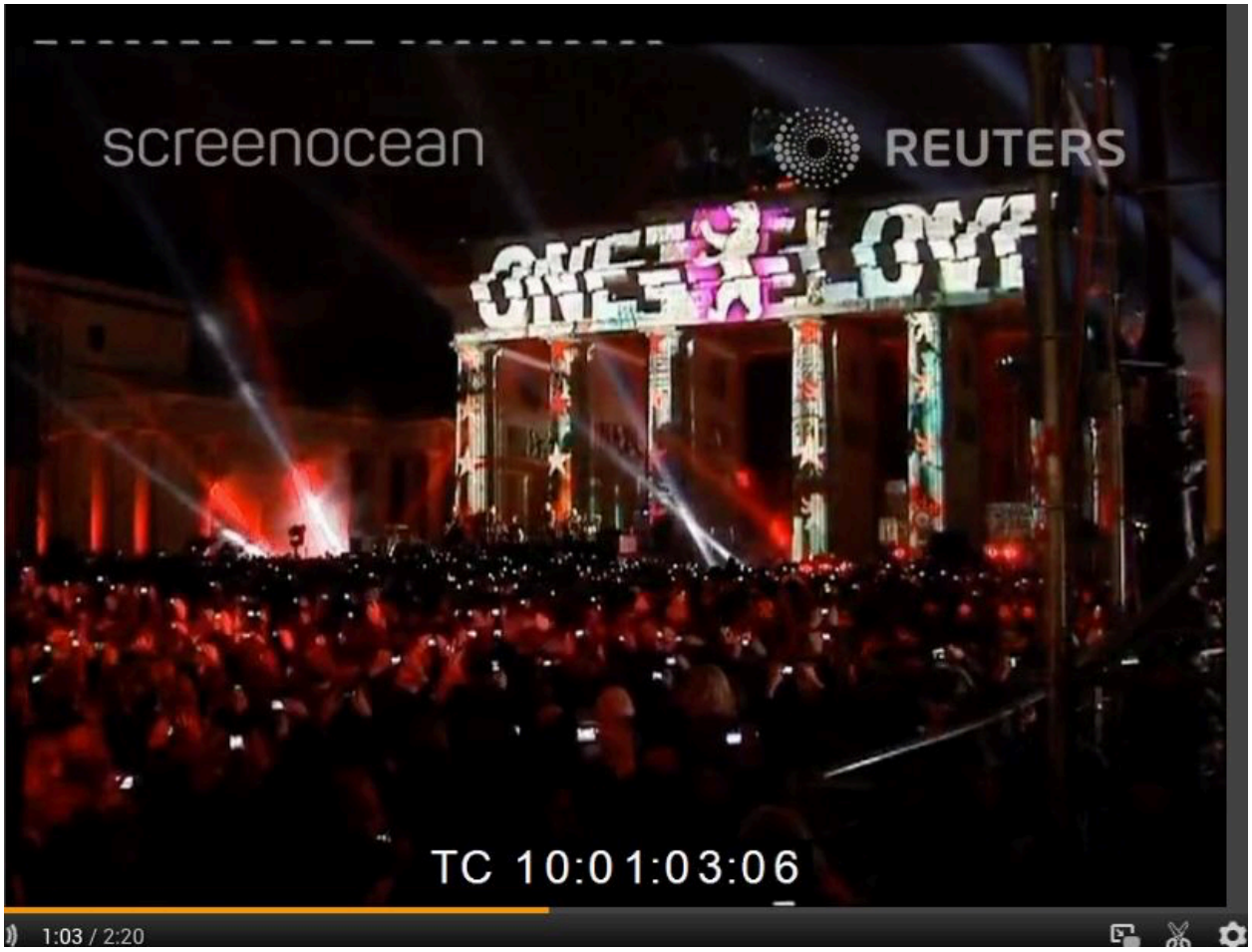
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